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Frequently Asked Questions About SAMBA Employee Benevolent Fund

Below are a number of questions that are frequently asked to Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This bulletin provides answers to those common questions which have been compiled for ease of reference.

Below are the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Purpose of the Employee Benevolent Fund (EBF)

Q: What is the Employee Benevolent Fund (EBF)?

A: The Employee Benevolent Fund (EBF) is a unique benefit fund that promptly provides a \$17,500 or \$35,000 death benefit to the designated beneficiary(ies) of a deceased EBF member typically within 24-48 hours.

Q: Who administers the EBF?

A: The Special Agents Mutual Benefit Association (SAMBA) administers the EBF. ReliaStar/Voya Life Insurance Company is the underwriter. Upon notification of an employee's death, your agency representative will notify SAMBA immediately so that payment can be made promptly to the designated beneficiary(ies).

Eligibility and Retainment of Coverage

Q: When does the EBF special enrollment period begin and how long will it last?

A: Beginning May 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019, eligible TSA employees will be offered a 30-day open enrollment period to enroll in SAMBA's EBF.

Q: Who is eligible to enroll in the EBF during this special enrollment period?

A: All full-time and part-time employees occupying permanent positions who are actively at work (not on official leave or leave without pay (LWOP)) during the open enrollment period. After May 31, 2019, eligible new employees may enroll within 60 days of their date of hire.

Please Note: New enrollees who are on extended paid/unpaid leave such as annual leave, sick or LWOP must return to active duty or pay status to be covered and eligible for benefits. If a newly enrolled employee has not been in an active duty/pay status and dies prior to returning to active duty/pay status, they will not be entitled to collect the SAMBA benefit.

Q: Who is NOT eligible to enroll in the EBF during the special enrollment period?

- A:**
1. Employees on leave without pay for any purpose;
 2. Contractors
 3. Employees who are on a time-limited appointment of less than 365 days

Q: If I am not eligible to enroll during the 60-day open enrollment period because I am not actively at work (either in military or on extended leave), can I join SAMBA when I return to work?

A: No. You must wait until the next open enrollment period. Only new employees are eligible for enrollment outside of the open enrollment, or previous EBF members who lost membership due to serving active duty in military may enroll within 60 days upon return.

Q: What happens when an EBF member is no longer an active TSA employee?

A: An existing EBF member who ceases being an active employee for any reason (e.g., resignation, retirement, removal, transfer to another agency, entry on duty with the military or National Guard, or LWOP for more than 365 days), will no longer be a member of SAMBA's EBF.

Q: What happens if an EBF member is on LWOP (less than 365 days)?

A: An existing EBF member who is in a LWOP status (excluding military), such as under the Family and Medical Leave Act or if receiving Workers Compensation benefits, or for any other authorized official reason, shall continue as a member of the Fund as long as they contact SAMBA to make arrangements to pay the premium.

Q: What happens if an EBF member is on LWOP or resigns for military obligations?

A: Any existing EBF member who enters on active military duty and is placed on LWOP or resigns to perform active duty in the military will no longer be a member of the EBF. Employees who return to work at TSA must re-enroll in the Fund within 60 days following their return to become a member of the Fund again.

Q: If I am an EBF member and called to serve my required 2-week active military duty training period, how does that affect my EBF membership?

A: While you are on active military training duty, your existing EBF membership is automatically suspended. Upon your return to active employment, your membership will automatically be re-instated. This is an automatic process and no forms are required from an EBF member to notify SAMBA.

Q: Are benefits paid if an EBF member should die while serving on active duty in the military?

A: No.

Q: Are there any other exclusions or limitations that I should know before I sign up to be an EBF member?

A: Two other exclusions exist.

- a. In the event that the death of a fund member is by suicide, no payment shall be made unless the existing EBF member has been a fund member for a continuous period of two years or more prior to the date of death.
- b. If the named beneficiary is responsible for the EBF member's death, no payment shall be made to him or her (other than by accidental means).

EBF Member Cost and Enrollment Process

Q: What is the cost to be an EBF member?

A: The cost is \$39 a year for the \$17,500 benefit or \$78 a year for the \$35,000 benefit.

Q: How do I sign up for coverage?

A: Enrollment is done online through SAMBA's website at www.sambaplans.com.

STEP 1: Go to the [Employee Benevolent Fund](#) page

STEP 2: Click on the [Participating Federal Agencies](#) button

STEP 3: Select **TSA – Transportation Security Administration** from the participating agency dropdown list

STEP 4: Follow the prompts to register on the SAMBA website and enroll for coverage

Q: Why does SAMBA require a personal e-mail address?

A: For security purposes, government agencies are more frequently restricting communications from external entities. Having your personal e-mail address allows SAMBA to provide you with needed and timely information regarding your EBF coverage, including your annual premium payment notification.

Q: When will my EBF membership be effective?

A: The effective date for all employees enrolling during this open enrollment period will be June 1, 2019. SAMBA will send new enrollees a Statement of Coverage page indicating the amount of their coverage for \$17,500 or \$35,000 and the effective date of their enrollment. Subsequent renewals happen on a calendar year basis.

Q: Will the EBF membership expire?

A: No, as long as the member meets all of the eligibility requirements and pays the annual renewal premium, the coverage will remain in effect. However, if you are on LWOP or military leave, the circumstances will change. Please see above questions under the [Eligibility and Retainment of Coverage section](#).

Q: Who will receive the one-time death payment of \$17,500 or \$35,000 if I should die?

A: During the enrollment process, you will be asked to designate both a primary beneficiary(ies) and contingent beneficiary(ies). The primary beneficiary(ies) MUST be at least 18 years of age or older. Minors, estates, and trusts cannot be designated as the primary beneficiary(ies), but may be designated as contingent beneficiary(ies). Should the EBF member not be survived by his or her primary and contingent beneficiary(ies), payment shall be made in the following order: member's spouse; member's children in equal shares, member's parents, member's siblings, member's estate.

Q: Why do I have to designate person(s) 18 years of age or older as a primary beneficiary for my EBF?

A: The EBF benefit option is designed to pay an immediate death payment within 24-48 hours of an agency's death notification. When minor children and/or trusts are designated as primary beneficiaries, SAMBA cannot make immediate payments until certain requirements are fulfilled such as legal guardianship is established or there is settlement of the trust/estate.

Q: Can I change my beneficiary for the EBF anytime?

A: Yes, go to www.sambaplans.com and login to your account. On the Member Services page, click on Employee Benevolent Fund and then select Update Your Beneficiaries.

Q: Can an EBF member cancel his or her enrollment?

A: Yes, however, any EBF member who elects to cancel his/her membership will not be eligible for re-enrollment until the next open enrollment period.

Q: How often will TSA have open enrollment periods?

A: Open enrollment periods will be coordinated between SAMBA and TSA and will usually NOT be held more than once every two or more years.

Questions?

Please contact the HCAccess Help Desk by phone at 1-877-872-7990, by fax at 1-877-872-7993, or by email at this [link](#). Live agents are available 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays, with additional hours for recruitment calls only from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. EDT Saturday and 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. EDT Sunday. Visit our website at this [link](#), and check out HCAccess online at this [link](#).